

Palm's Spring Festival kicks off



GIRL'S GAME... Communities Minister Lindy Nelson-Carr celebrates with the Jets team

League's no girly game

By JOHN ANDERSEN

RUGBY league is a girl's game. That's a fact and it was proved on Palm Island yesterday when the mighty Jets triumphed over the valiant Bulls in the female foody grand final. The big girls collided. The sparks flew and man-on-man weren't there some meat-on-meat hit-ups. What a game.

And with strong opposing players like Astrid Pickles in the Jets and Carmie Ketchup in the Bulls, it was a lay down misere right from the kick-off that this was going to be Psycho meets Gunlight at OK Corral.

It made State of Origin look like the sort of foody played at pre-school little lunch. The girls pulled no punches. Anyone luckless or silly enough to be wearing their hair in long braids was in for a lot of pain.

Townsville ref Jason Roberts had his work cut out as the game flowed from end to end. He awarded one penalty for hair pulling, but missed some of the more vigorous action played behind the scenes.

"It was a good game. Both sides played well," he said. Foody was only part of the action on Palm yesterday. The arrival of nearly 50 babies born within the last 12 months was celebrated at the community's first ever welcoming ceremony. Singer-songwriter Archie



Getting down and dirty

Roach was on hand to give the babes in arms a musical welcome to their island home.

"This marks the start of the island's Spring Festival," Mayor Al Lacey said.

Member for Townsville Mike Reynolds and Communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships Minister Lindy Nelson-Carr said that being surrounded by so many smiling babies and parents made for a 'joyous occasion'.

Cr Lacey said that with the baby welcoming, Archie Roach, the foody finals and more live bands last night, yesterday would shape up as Palm's Big Day Out.

"A day like this involves all of the community. That is why the council gets behind it," he said. The Jets beat the Bulls 22-10, but the score does not paint a

true picture of the game. It was tough and brutal and could have gone either way.

The Jets had the law on their side in the form of Sergeant Michelle Sawtell.

Sgt Sawtell has been stationed on the island for three years and played her first season of league this year. She took some big hits yesterday, but hasn't got any plans of throwing in the foody boots.

She's on the scary side of 29, but reckons she's got a few more seasons left.

"I'll play until I start to break-up," she said.

Jets front rower Morana Sam in the after game wash said the Bulls had become frustrated and started arguing among themselves. She said the Jets kept their cool, stayed focused and played better football.

"We made a lot of mistakes, but we made up for them. And we had really good supporters," she said.

The B grade men's grand final between the Skippyacks and the Bulls was another tough bout.

It was hard football and the Bulls won 40-32.

Due to travelling commitments the Townsville Bulletin was not present at the A grade grand final. Cr Lacey said the Bulls beat the Skippyacks 28-22 and that it was one of the best games of foody he has ever seen.

Air NZ cuts back fares

AIR New Zealand is to cut its year-round cheapest fares to Australia by an average of 15 per cent.

The price cuts applied to long-term, lead-in (or cheapest) fares and were effective from October 14, the airline said yesterday.

Customers travelling from Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch, Queenstown and Dunedin to Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and the Gold Coast could benefit from the cuts.

Air NZ general manager Tasman Pacific Airline Glen Sowry said prices were dropping to stimulate demand on the highly-competitive Tasman market, which has an oversupply of capacity.

Air NZ was investing almost \$NZ60 million (\$A48.9 million) in fitting its fleet of 13 A320 and five Boeing 767 aircraft on Tasman and Pacific Island routes with new personal on-demand in-flight entertainment, he said.

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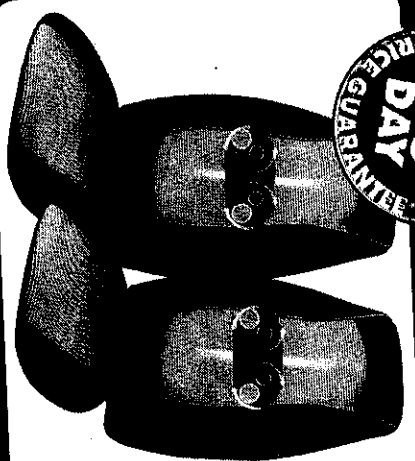
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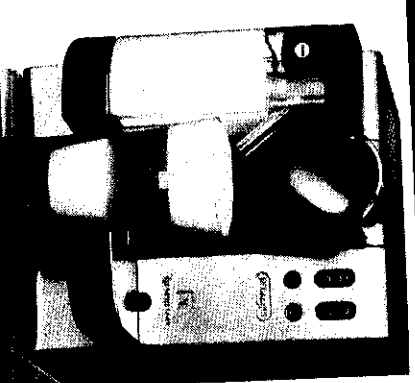


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